

**San Francisco Bay Area Wetlands Restoration Program
Management Group**

**September 24, 2002
Meeting Summary**

Attendees –

Marcia Brockbank (San Francisco Estuary Project)
John Brosnan (Wetlands Restoration Program)
Mike Connor (San Francisco Estuary Institute)
Ruben Guieb – via phone (State Water Resources Control Board)
Beth Huning (San Francisco Bay Joint Venture)
Amy Hutzal (State Coastal Conservancy)
Paul Jones (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency)
Molly Martindale (U.S. Army Corps of Engineers)
Steve McAdam (San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission)
Mike Monroe (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency)
Brian Mulvey (National Marine Fisheries Service)
Peggy Olofson (Invasive Spartina Project)
Cdr. Steve Thompson (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration)
Bruce Wolfe (San Francisco Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board)
Katie Wood (San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission)

1. Introductions/Review Agenda

Mike Monroe (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency) chaired the meeting and called it to order. Members made self-introductions. Mike reviewed the agenda items and initiated Announcements. He announced the addition of Beth Huning (San Francisco Bay Joint Venture) to the Management Group and welcomed her.

Beth then shared that the annual Joint Venture Planning Meeting date has been changed from October 17th and will be rescheduled for a new date in early November. The meeting will consist of a review of the Joint Venture Implementation Strategy, how the group is progressing on the implementation, and assessing any needed changes in actions.

Marcia Brockbank (San Francisco Estuary Project) stated that the Estuary Project has released RFQs for its small grants program. If anyone needs further information, they should contact her.

Steve McAdam (San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission) updated the group on the status of BCDC's new mitigation policies. The public hearing was held on September 19th and the close of the written comment period is today, September 24th. He stated that the comments received have been largely favorable towards the new policies. The Commission will consider formal adoption at its next meeting.

Bruce Wolfe (San Francisco Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board) stated that the California state budget has been signed.

Ruben Guieb (State Water Resources Control Board) shared that the State Board's FY 02/03 budget for the 401 Program's "Compensatory Mitigation Compliance Study" is still available for implementation. The study will begin in Regions 2 and 4 (San Francisco and Los Angeles, respectively) and then will be applied statewide thereafter.

John Brosnan (Wetlands Restoration Program) stated that he and Marcia Brockbank will be working together on submission of a regional EPA Wetland Program grant application. The application will seek approximately \$50,000 to pay, in part, for paid members of the Monitoring Group.

2. August 27, 2002 Management Group Meeting Summary

John briefly reviewed the action items from the previous Management Group meeting summary. These included: the field trip for the Executive Council, which will not take place; revision of the Draft Working Agreement, which has been completed; having Beth Huning attend the meeting; excluding the coastal segments of Region 2 from the Restoration Program's geographical boundary; and determining the Monitoring Group's role in the Restoration Program.

Beth wanted to clarify one point from the meeting notes. She stated that in terms of the funds going to Ducks Unlimited (DU) from Joint Venture for purposes of data monitoring, this is not an entirely new project. DU is already doing project tracking for another Joint Venture. Further, the money has not yet been awarded to them.

3. WRP Group Reports

Design Review Group. John provided a review of the action items from the previous Design Review Group (DRG), which focused mainly on the upcoming review of the Breuner Mitigation Bank. He then went over the RFQ for paid members of the DRG. He stated that the RFQ has been through two rounds of review and is almost ready to be released through ABAG. The recent addition of solicitation for Monitoring Group members will be removed from the RFQ in advance of its release. Calls for paid Monitoring Group members will occur in the coming months, when funds are secured for those positions.

Molly Martindale (U.S. Army Corps of Engineers) stated that the future Monitoring Group member RFQ should include language that directs applicants to indicate whether or not they have applied for a DRG position.

Steve McAdam added that the Inner Bair Island project should be added to the list of DRG projects to review.

Monitoring Group. Paul Jones (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency) reported on the action items of the last Monitoring group meeting. This report focused on the consensus that the WRMP should become part of the Restoration Program and the memo he prepared that outlines that process. The memo will ultimately – in some form – be presented at the next Executive

Council meeting. The process included the preparation of a memo that outlines differing levels of effort in a Monitoring program. The memo will be reviewed here, today, and then again at the next Management group meeting before going to the Executive Council.

Paul's review included an outline for a single entity that oversees such items as building upon the EcoAtlas, the Habitat Goals report and the goals of the Joint Venture, and ecosystem response to management in the estuary. This included a plan for a monitoring data repository for use by all stakeholders, including the public. Specifically, in regards to the alternatives presented, the comprehensive program as it is detailed would translate into the basic comprehensive monitoring program available. Paul reminded the group that the Executive Council favors making informed decisions based on Management group-analyzed alternatives.

Molly wanted to know what exactly we would be asking from the Executive Council, i.e., money. Marcia wanted to know if we would include options of where these monies would come from. Paul stated there are various approaches that could be utilized to procure funding, such as legislative or fee-based sources, but that costs would surely have to be supplemented by grant monies.

Molly then handed out her alternative proposal. She stated that her proposal uses the same elements as Paul's, although the actions are more specific. She stated that the central data repository is a key component and it is essential that all entities are able to use this. She sought comments from the group.

Bruce stated that presenting these concepts and making a recommendation to the Executive Council is essential. Paul wanted the group to know that these costs came from SFEI and are realistic. Molly stated that it would be good to include projected agency staff time on this.

Marcia suggested recommending a phased approach to the Executive Council, using these steps as outlined over a period of time. Bruce concurred, stating that setting up a data warehouse, even as a phased project would prove to be a milestone that the group could be proud of. Molly stated that we should select a few key protocols to focus on, which could also serve as milestones. **ACTION ITEM:** Revise Monitoring group memo and bring back to next Management meeting for discussion.

On a separate issue, Paul reiterated that the lack of participation by some Management group member agencies is causing a lack of effective dialogue, particularly in regards to those participating in the Cargill salt ponds purchase. Molly concurred and stated that the Executive Council members need to address this within their agencies. Some group members felt that the long-term management structure being established for the Cargill purchase is something that could be effectively debated at Management group meetings given better attendance. Group members wanted to avoid duplicative processes. This should be an **agenda item** at the next Executive Council meeting. The idea was put forth to craft this concern into a memo to deliver to Executive Council members. **ACTION ITEM:** Management group members to discuss attendance/participation issue with their Executive Council contacts.

4. Draft Working Agreement

Mike updated the group on the revisions to the document and pointed out that six pages had been cut from the document. He suggested that the Working Agreement be further revised to incorporate the DRG and the Monitoring group under the umbrella of the Science Group. This will then be run past Alexis Strauss (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency) and Mary Nichols (Resources Agency) before the November 4th meeting. **ACTION ITEM:** Revise Working Agreement to reflect Science Group and distribute to Alexis and Mary.

5. Break

6. Restoration Program Image and Outreach

John shared with the group the draft letterhead and brochure for the Restoration Program and requested feedback. Group consensus was that a logo is needed for any letterhead. The group then provided feedback on the arrangement of agency names in the letterhead.

John updated the group on the website planning. The domain name of www.sfwetlands.ca.gov has been secured and will be established this week. John will serve as the Webmaster and create the site. John told the group about the PowerPoint presentation that he's prepared. He and Mike have reviewed the draft presentation and the first showing will be at a brownbag lunch at the Regional Board.

7. Subtidal Goals Presentation

Katie Wood (San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission) and Brian Mulvey (National Marine Fisheries Service) presented the progress of their agencies' work on the Subtidal Habitat Goals project. A brief handout was provided. The presentation covered subtidal habitat definition, project history, the project purpose, and past and future steps. A meeting including myriad stakeholders will be held at BCDC on October 2nd.

8. Invasive Spartina Project Presentation

Peggy Olofson (Invasive Spartina Project) made her presentation of the Spartina issues around the Bay. The Invasive Spartina Project began in 2000 with Coastal Conservancy and CAL-FED funding. At present, there are five species of Spartina around the Bay, as well as hybrids. Hybrids are proving to be the largest problem, in that they are more robust than *alterniflora* itself. Major problems include the loss of mudflat habitat, interference with natural beach movement, alteration of elevations in the intertidal zone, and implications for interference with restoration projects. Adaptive Management and Integrated Vegetative Management – among other potential solutions – will be employed to address this issue. Peggy emphasized that restoration efforts should be coordinated with eradication efforts.

The draft EIR/EIS on the Spartina project is due in mid-October.

In terms of bringing this issue before the Executive Council, questions presented might include: What does this project intend to do? Some group members felt that all voices on the Spartina

issue should be heard at that meeting. Molly stated that brevity is key in the presentation to the Executive Council. Presentation items should include a summary of any suggested actions to take. Amy Hutzler (State Coastal Conservancy) expressed that the Council should hear the specific impacts of this on the South Bay salt ponds.

9. Wrap-up/Next Meeting Date and Agenda Items

The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, October 22nd, from 1 P.M. to 4 P.M. at the Regional Board office. Mike summarized the action items from this session and adjourned the meeting.

ACTION ITEMS:

- Management group members to discuss attendance/participation issue with their Executive Council contacts.
- Revise Working Agreement to reflect Science Group and distribute to Alexis and Mary.
- Revise Monitoring group memo and bring back to next Management meeting for discussion.